Demon Quest part four - Starfall, by Paul Magrs

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(Transcriber's note - despite being set in 1976, the American dialogue and the background music is more 1940s Chandler-esque to my ear, but I'm not American so what do I know.)

(The Story So Far - extracts from the previous three stories.)

BUDDY [narrating]: Picture this. A day in July. Central Park West, New York City. 1976. The skies were blue, and the park was swarming with New Yorkers and visitors drinking up the sun. And there was I, at the pretzel stand by the West Gate. I'm Buddy, and I'm gonna tell you about the strange events of a few days when the whole of New York seemed to go crazy, and Miss Starfall captured the hearts and minds of the city's denizens. Miss Starfall, the Big Apple's latest and undoubtedly greatest superheroine. You see, I knew all about it, true believers. I got the skinny on all those strange and spectacular events because I was there. I was the poor guy who happened to be right at the centre of the action. How? Well, I was the fella who found the meteorite in Central Park. But maybe that's getting ahead of myself. Maybe I should begin with Alice, my girl. Yeah, Alice, staring down at the Park from a window of a fantastic suite in the Dakota Building, that luxurious apartment block. From there she could see me, working hard at my stand, hawking my wares. Every morning, she caught my eye and waved down at me, her lowly bum of a boyfriend. She always seemed to me like a princess in a fairy tale tower.

MIMSY: Alice. Alice Trefusis, come away from that window at once. Do I pay you to lollygag at windows? Am I paying you to wave at strangers?
(Think Baby Jane Hudson played by Bette Davis.)

BUDDY [narrating]: Huh. That's Mimsy Loyne, legendary movie star. She's from a different, more glamorous age, is Miss Loyne. All these years after her own star fell out of the Hollywood firmament, Mimsy is a dried out old husk, bitter and nasty as a sackful of prunes.

ALICE: I'm sorry, Miss Loyne. It's just that the Park looks so beautiful today in the sun.
MIMSY: You are looking at that damn fool pretzel seller. You don't need to lie to me, girl. Come and sit by my chaise longue. We need to get to work on chapter a hundred and thirty seven.
ALICE: Yes, Miss Loyne.
MIMSY: I was four.

BUDDY [narrating]: Alice was the old monster's literary secretary. She had to explain to me what that was. Something about helping the old dame write up her memoirs. But maybe beginning with them is the wrong place after all. Maybe I should begin with that strange bunch of people in the hidden away attic of the Dakota Building. The secret society who met each evening that summer to light candles and gussy themselves up in strange ceremonial robes.

(The cultists chant breathy mostly unintelligible syllables, multiple voices making things even harder.)
CULTISTS: Cos hoc tear pen, Cos har rite pen. Now amana missis quo. Quo mars hanna aram. Betor bainga. Betor betingo. Yet factor hit. Fat deity ho. Fat deity ho. (continues)

BUDDY [narrating]: Even in the sweltering heat of a New York July, they met to perform their peculiar ceremonials under the low eaves of that Gothic mansion. And they weren't light-weight robes neither. But hey, this is New York. What you gonna say? Who cares what crazy stuff people get up to in their own time, or what knitwear they wind round their necks. But the problem was, these bizarre rites weren't so harmless as you might think. Oh, but that's not the right place to begin either. I should mention the previous evening. I'd packed up my stall. Alice

had managed to get a couple of hours away from her dragon mistress. We were taking advantage of the cooler night breezes, and we were walking through the Park.

(Distant car horn.)
ALICE: I feel like I'll never escape from her. Her autobiography's endless. We're only up to Pearl Harbour.
BUDDY: Hey, just a few more months, you said, and then it'll be over.
ALICE: (sighs) If I didn't need the money so much.
BUDDY: And I ain't much help. The money I make hawking pretzels, I can't even afford pretzels for dinner.
(Something roaring overhead.)
BUDDY: Hey!
(Whoosh, boom!)
BUDDY: What the?
ALICE: Oh, my God! Did you see that?
BUDDY: See it? It's still scorching into my retina.
ALICE: What was that, a meteorite?

BUDDY [narrating]: Alice only had another twenty minutes free time, and we spent them roaming in the dark trees beyond the duck pond, hoping to find what had landed. But it wasn't too nice in there, gloomy and not a good place to go hunting after dark. We found nothing that night.

ALICE: I'd better get back to Mimsy's apartment.
BUDDY: Shame.
ALICE: Yeah. See you later.

BUDDY [narrating]: But then I guess this story of mine really gets into action when the Doctor arrived in New York City, July twelfth 1976. (The Tardis materialises beneath the dialogue.) He was here with two friends of his, a man and a woman. One of them didn't look happy at all.

DOCTOR: Nothing could be as dangerous or as deadly as the ordeal that Mike and I have recently undergone, Mrs Wibbsey. This little jaunt will be a doddle, I promise.
MIKE: He's right, you know. I never thought I'd get out of that Alpine hotel alive.
WIBBSEY: A doddle, he says. He said I was going to enjoy going to Paris with him. Well, I didn't.
DOCTOR: Stop complaining. You're suddenly giving me a headache. Look, I even managed to get us slap-bang in the middle of Central Park, right time and place. The Tardis is feeling more like her old self. One whiff of the fourth artefact and she was here, even with one crucial piece of the spatial geometer still missing, no small thanks to you, Mrs Wibbsey.
WIBBSEY: Here we go.
DOCTOR: If you hadn't given away one of the most vital components from the Tardis to someone who looked very like the Emperor Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus in the Church Hall jumble sale
MIKE: All right, Doctor, you've made your point. Mrs Wibbsey, you're needed on this trip just as much as I am. All three of us appear on that comic book cover you have there. Since you were given it with the other artefacts, it's obviously the next clue in our paper trail.
WIBBSEY: That doesn't mean I have to like being here, does it?
DOCTOR: But we're in New York, New York, New York! at just about the time it's becoming the cultural capital of your world. And we've got work to do. Oh! Oh!
WIBBSEY: What is it? What's the matter?
MIKE: You look as if you're having a funny turn.
DOCTOR: I don't feel at all well.
MIKE: That's not like you.
DOCTOR: Must be something nasty in the atmosphere. Can't either of you feel it?
WIBBSEY: Feel what, exactly?
DOCTOR: I don't know, but whatever it is, I don't like it, Wibbs.
MIKE: Do you want to sit down?
DOCTOR: Sit down when there's work to be done? Come along.

WIBBSEY: What was all that about?
MIKE: Beats me, but he looks quite drawn suddenly, doesn't he.
WIBBSEY: He'd better not blame my steak and kidney pudding.
DOCTOR: Pity there's no one down at that pretzel stand. It's always best to start chatting to the locals. Oh, who's on for a stroll in the Park, huh?

BUDDY [narrating]: Okay, so I'd left my post unattended, so shoot me. But that morning I was taking an early lunch break and perambulating through the trees with my beloved Alice, who was trembling and upset, having been on the receiving end of yet another bawling out from her hideous employer.

ALICE: I can't stand it much longer, Buddy. She's a crazy woman. This morning, she got so stuck into her memories she thought I was her old co-star and rival Jessica Flintheart, and she started yelling and screaming and I thought she was gonna leap right off of her chaise longue and what, what is it, Buddy?
BUDDY: That. That's it. Look!
ALICE: You haven't been listening to a word I've been saying, have you?

BUDDY [narrating]: Love the gal though I did, her stories did tend to blur one into the next. It was always about the craziness of that old coot, Mimsy Loyne, yadda, yadda, yadda. But this morning I had found something worthwhile to distract me. Whoo hoo hoo, was it worthwhile. But how had the authorities missed this? Where were they? How could this thing just be sitting here?

ALICE: What is it?

BUDDY [narrating]: Hissing, crackling, half-submerged in the churned up topsoil, there was a meteorite in Central Park. It was still cooling down. No one had noticed it. That was crazy! It was as big as a man's head, glowing green. How come no one had seen where the thing had landed?

ALICE: Oh, my goodness. That's what we saw land, isn't it? Last night. And it's just been waiting here, like we were the ones meant to find it.
BUDDY: Huh? Alice, keep back. We don't know what it is. It could be some goofy government thing, or some crazy weapon. Alice?
ALICE: It's okay. I just know it's gonna be okay.

BUDDY [narrating]: Much as I adored her, Alice never could listen and take instructions. Just then I had some sympathy with her employer, cos she wasn't listening to a word I said, and went stumbling across the grass and through the trees, closer and closer to the strange meteor.

ALICE: It wants me. Buddy, can you hear it? It, it's singing to me.
BUDDY: Damn it, Alice, meteors can't sing. Alice! No, no, don't touch that thing.
(Fizz. Alice squeals.)
ALICE: Oh, oh, whoa.

BUDDY [narrating]: I hurried over to where she'd been blown by that brief explosion. Was she even alive? Her body was glowing. It was giving off this kind of radiation. Her eyes were closed, but she wasn't burnt, she was golden. And then there was a crashing through the trees. I hardly looked up, though I guessed that someone had heard the noise and was standing there with me, but I couldn't take my eyes off Alice.

DOCTOR: What did she do?
BUDDY: Huh? Who are you?
DOCTOR: Don't stand there making small talk, man, just tell me, what did she do?
MIKE: Doctor, this thing in the ground, it looks rather like a meteor.
WIBBSEY: Exactly like on the cover of this comic book.

BUDDY: Alice. Alice, can you stand? Look, she's waking up. Alice, we gotta get out of here.
DOCTOR: Did she touch that piece of rock? Tell me.
BUDDY: I guess she did. I tried to warn her.
DOCTOR: That was a very foolish thing to do. Here, let me see.
ALICE: Oh, no! No, get away from me. Don't let him come near me, Buddy.
BUDDY: What's that? Alice, you're okay. You're all right.
ALICE: Make him go away, Buddy.
BUDDY: Listen, fella.
DOCTOR: Doctor.
BUDDY: Right, whatever you are, just keep away from us.
MIKE: She's glowing gold. Can't you see? Something dreadful has happened to your girlfriend.
WIBBSEY: As I keep saying, just like the cover of that comic book.
BUDDY: What are you talking about, lady?
WIBBSEY: Any minute now, she's going to start flinging laser bolts out of her eyes and hands, nearly killing us all.
DOCTOR: Yes, you might be right. Perhaps we should er, back away.
BUDDY: Laser bolts? Now listen, you jokers.
DOCTOR: Doctor.
(Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.)
BUDDY: Alice, honey, what are you doing?
ALICE: Ah, whoa! I can't control it, Buddy. I can't stop it.
(More whooshes under dialogue.)
DOCTOR: Oh dear.
MIKE: Can't you help her, Doctor?
WIBBSEY: She's beyond help, that's what it says here. Possessed by an alien life force, Alice Trefusis is destined to become Miss Starfall, America's hottest new superheroine!
MIKE: And we witnessed it.
DOCTOR: Oh, that's just fantastical hyperbole. However, something has undoubtedly happened to her.
BUDDY: Alice? Alice? Please stop!
ALICE: Can't you see, Buddy? I've been reborn. I'm someone new now. I'm no longer a spineless, nervous little secretary. Now I am a ooooh (thud)
BUDDY: She's passed out.
WIBBSEY: I'm not at all surprised.
DOCTOR: I think you'd better get her indoors. She'll have attracted attention, flinging lightning about like that.
MIKE: What about the meteorite?
DOCTOR: We'd better take it somewhere safe. Give me your jacket, Mike, to wrap it in.
MIKE: What about yours?
DOCTOR: Don't be ridiculous, I've got all my things in it.
MIKE: Oh.
WIBBSEY: Oh, for heaven's sake. You men. Just pick the thing up.
DOCTOR: Not with your bare hands, Mrs Wibbsey! We don't want you running around with superpowers as well.

BUDDY [narrating]: Superpowers? Did you all hear what the Doctor said? Somehow he knew what was happening to my Alice in the wilder reaches of Central Park that afternoon in July. He knew the untold cosmic energies that were coursing through the veins and blood vessels of my girl.

ALICE: Oh. Oh. Buddy? I feel so strange.
BUDDY: Yeah, yeah, I'm going to get you indoors. You'll be okay. You were firing laser blasts! (hysterical laughter)
ALICE: I need to get back to the Dakota Building. My lunch hour is up. (faints)

BUDDY [narrating]: The Doctor was clutching the strange meteor, wrapped in his friend's coat by now. Out of the corner of my eye I saw him nod to his Mrs Wibbsey. She nodded back and

moved over to help me with Alice. We carried my beloved over the hills, through the trees, back to the honking traffic and city noise of Eighth Avenue.

WIBBSEY: Is she always as light as this?
BUDDY: There's something wrong with her, isn't there? The way she was glowing before?
WIBBSEY: I'm sure she'll be all right after a rest.
BUDDY: Superpowers. You guys were talking about some kind of comic book.
WIBBSEY: Just ignore us. The important thing is to get Alice back home.
BUDDY: It isn't her home. She's got a room up there in that fancy apartment building. She lives with a monstrous old dame name of Mimsy Loyne.
WIBBSEY: Not the famous movie star? From the talkies?
BUDDY: Talkies? Geez, lady, which year did you step out of?
WIBBSEY: 1932, as it happens, via the twenty first century, AD 46 and 1894. But you needn't bother about that. Let's concentrate on getting this girl to safety.
BUDDY: Cool.

BUDDY [narrating]: This woman may have been crazy, but I was glad I had her help carrying Alice over the road and into the Dakota. We attracted some pretty suspicious looks, toting an unconscious girl about the place. In the elevator, we prepared ourselves to face the wrath of Mimsy Loyne. Meanwhile, back in Central Park, the Doctor and his companion Mike Yates were carrying the mysterious meteorite into their Time spacecraft, the Tardis. Hold on, you're thinking. Time spacecraft? Well, sure, I never knew all this till later, when they gave me the lowdown on what they'd been up to. Even now, after all the events of those few days, I still find it hard to believe that this Doctor fella had a spaceship hidden away in the Park, right next to the statue of Alice in Wonderland.

(Drilling noise.)
MIKE: What are you going to do?
DOCTOR: Analyse it, Mike. It seems a rather strange sort of meteorite to me. I'd like to know a little more about it. These slivers of rock I'm fetching off are fascinating.
MIKE: Are you sure you're up to this? You still don't look well to me.
DOCTOR: I certainly feel a bit more chipper now I'm back in the Tardis.
MIKE: It couldn't be that meteor, could it, making you feel rotten? You know, like Superman and Kryptonite.
DOCTOR: It may have slipped your notice, Captain Yates, but I am not Superman. Now, just let me concentrate. Proximity to the meteor isn't affecting me now, is it?
MIKE: I think I should go after Mrs Wibbsey. I don't like us being split up like this.
(Cracking sound.)
DOCTOR: Talking of splitting. Oh, well this whole thing suddenly sprung open like a puzzle box. Oh. And there's something inside.
MIKE: Careful, it looks hot. Here, use these tweezers.
DOCTOR: Thank you. Well, well, well.
MIKE: What on Earth is it?
DOCTOR: Unless my eyes deceive me, it's half a golden heart. I wonder where the other half is?
MIKE: It's beautiful.
DOCTOR: Mmm. Pass me that magnifying glass, would you? There seems to be some lettering stamped in the gold.
MIKE: Oh, that'll be the hallmark. 24 carat, is it?
DOCTOR: Shh. S E P U L.
MIKE: Sepul? Mmm, new one on me. I used to be quite good with gold marks. My sister works in a
DOCTOR: Shh, shh, shh. Mike, do you remember what the Demon said to me last time we met, when I asked where it wanted to take me so badly?
MIKE: It said it wanted to take you to. Ah, my memory's terrible these days. What was it now?
DOCTOR: It was Sepulchre, Mike, the first five letters of which are
BOTH: S E P U L!
DOCTOR: Come on!
MIKE: Where are we going?

DOCTOR: We should never have let Mrs Wibbsey wander off like that. She's got a wonderful nose for danger, that woman.

BUDDY [narrating]: But they hadn't gone far from the Tardis before they found something grisly, hidden in some of the Park undergrowth.

MIKE: Urgh! Doctor.
DOCTOR: What is it, Mike? Oh.

BUDDY [narrating]: It was the body of a man. Looked like it had been savaged pretty brutally. I'm sorry to say there was nothing specially new in that, not in New York, but although the fella had been a young man, there was a weird leathery look to the flesh, as if it had been freeze-dried.

DOCTOR: (groans) This is very bad news, Mike. Oh!
(Police sirens approach.)

BUDDY [narrating]: Then, all of a sudden, the police finally arrived, alerted by the weird noises and light show. They came crashing through the undergrowth and looked pretty startled to see these two guys talking calmly in English accents while standing over a mutilated corpse.

DOCTOR: Oh dear.
MIKE: Officers, we can explain.
COP: I bet you can, sir.
DOCTOR: Look here, gentlemen, you don't seriously think this has got anything to do with us, do you?
MIKE: Doctor, are you all right?
DOCTOR: (sotto) It's that feeling again.
COP: Get the cuffs, Driscoll.
DOCTOR: We were out for a stroll, weren't we, Mike.
MIKE: Yes. A lovely day for it.
DOCTOR: I mean, I, I wouldn't blame you for thinking I, I look fishy but

BUDDY [narrating]: Like any good cops would, they grabbed the Doctor and Mike, cuffed them, and bundled them into their patrol car. I only heard about this later, of course. Just then I was having a hard time of my own, because, up on the sixth floor of the Dakota Building, I was coming face to face with the woman I'd heard so much about in recent weeks. My girl's fiercesome employer.

WIBBSEY: Ooo, Mimsy Loyne. May I just say what an honour it is to meet you.
MIMSY: No, you may not. Who the hell are you, coming in here unannounced? And what have you done to my secretary?
WIBBSEY: She had a funny turn in the Park.
MIMSY: Is she drunk? She looks it.
BUDDY: Mrs Wibbsey, would you help me to lie her down? Where's her room, Miss Loyne?
MIMSY: You, you're the pathetic boyfriend, aren't you? The one who sells nuts in the street. I've seen her mooning after you.
BUDDY: My name's Buddy, ma'am. Alice really needs to rest. Something strange has happened to her.
MIMSY: Strange? What's wrong with her?

BUDDY [narrating]: I was in no mood to entertain the old broad with tales of what we'd been up to. I wasn't too impressed with her imperious manner. Her luxurious pad, with its high ceilings and fancy ornamentations didn't phase me either. All I cared about was getting Alice comfortable. With a disgusted sigh, the ancient movie star waved us in the direction of what was supposed to be Alice's room. In truth, it was a windowless cupboard. My girl was just waking up.

ALICE: Oh, I feel so strange, Buddy.
WIBBSEY: Have you got any pain?
ALICE: No. No, in fact I've never felt so amazing in my life. I feel wonderful!
(Police sirens outside.)
BUDDY: I think you should rest.
MIMSY [OC]: Hey, you, Buddy, or whatever your name is. The police are going into the Park down there. I count three, four, five patrol cars. Can I have a word with you, young man?
WIBBSEY: I'll go and see what Miss Loyne wants.
ALICE: Buddy? Buddy, what's happening to me? I don't even feel like the same girl any more.

BUDDY [narrating]: I tried to comfort her in my arms, but I knew she was right. She was changed. Something in that crazy meteor had changed her completely. And then I saw that Mrs Wibbsey had left something on the bed. A piece of paper she'd had wadded up in her fist.

ALICE: What is it?
BUDDY: It's that comic book she was talking about, or at least just the cover.
ALICE: Oh, you and your comic books.
BUDDY: Oh, my gosh. She's right, you know. We're all in the picture. But it's dated today. How can that be?
ALICE: Is this you and your comic store friends having some kind of joke? Let me see.
BUDDY: This is *you*, Alice. It's the meteor, it's them, and it's you and me in the Park.
ALICE: Miss Starfall? Is that who I am? Is that what I've become?

BUDDY [narrating]: I stared into the eyes of my wonderful girl. I could see she was scared, but the same time, excited. Miss Starfall, the new superheroine on the block, transformed by the rays of a mysterious meteor. Well, true believers, that's how it was. It was that self-same afternoon in July that my girlfriend started to fly! She began by levitating to the apartment ceiling.

ALICE: Hey! Hey, I can control this. I've got powers, Buddy. I've got actual, real, honest to goodness superpowers!
BUDDY: Alice, honey, come down from there.
ALICE: Oh my gosh, Buddy, look at me. Look at what I can, look at who I'm becoming.

BUDDY [narrating]: Well, what do you say when your girl changes like this? A guy can only step back and marvel. Alice went into a frenzy of activity. I stared amazed as she hunted through a trunk in the hallway of the apartment. She was looking for something, a feverish glint in her eye. The trunk contained old costumes and a reek of mothballs.

ALICE: These are some of Mimsy's Hollywood relics, Buddy. Her movie costumes, stolen from the sets of her pictures. She's been dragging them out to help with her memoirs.
BUDDY: That's very interesting, Alice, honey, but what's that
ALICE: Oh, look! I knew it was here. Mimsy's Valkyrie costume.
BUDDY: Oh, but that winged helmet and cape, they look just like
ALICE: The ones on the cover of that comic book. Exactly. See? It's all fate, Buddy. It was meant to be me who touched that meteorite, and who gained these miraculous powers, because I'm the one who can lay her hands on the Valkyrie outfit from Cecil B de Mille's disastrous Wagner epic!

BUDDY [narrating]: I watched amazed as Alice donned the elaborate costume. Her superheroine costume. She looked just like the real thing as she rose into the air with her cape streaming out behind her.

ALICE: Oh ho ho! Look at me, Buddy Hudson. I have become Miss Starfall, just as the comic book says.

BUDDY [narrating]: Meanwhile, Mrs Wibbsey, unaware of any of these amazing events, was watching with Mimsy Loyne, her favourite talkies glamour star, remember, at the living room

window, watching the police pouring into Central Park's western gates. They saw the paramedics and their ambulance, the forensics guys.

MIMSY: There's a body. Oh, I love a good murder, don't you?
WIBBSEY: Well, I'm not really ghoulish.
MIMSY: Oh, don't be so uptight, Wibbsey, is it? There's nothing like a good murder to get the heart pumping with excitement and intrigue. Oh, and look, the police have already apprehended two very shady looking suspects.
WIBBSEY: Where? I can't see.
MIMSY: There, look.
WIBBSEY: Oh no! But that's the Doctor, and Mike.
MIMSY: Mmm, they look pretty guilty to me. Friends of yours, Wibbsey?
WIBBSEY: The Doctor's got a habit of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I've got to get after them. Buddy? Buddy, I need your help.
BUDDY [OC]: What is it?
MIMSY: Is Alice all right? I hope nothing untoward has gone on in my apartment.
BUDDY [OC]: That kind of depends on what you mean by untoward, Mimsy.
MIMSY: Miss Loyne to you.
BUDDY: Alice has flown out of the hall window.
WIBBSEY: What?
MIMSY: Narcotics. They brought drugs into my home.
BUDDY: I don't mean she's tripping, Miss Loyne. This is for real.
WIBBSEY: You mean she's actually flying?
(Whoosh.)

BUDDY [narrating]: Alice had never felt so free. She soared and zoomed across midtown. She held her breath for the first ten minute, it seemed like, and when at last she let it out, it was in a great burst of laughter. Miss Starfall, as she now was, cartwheeled through the canyons of the streets round Broadway, she tumbled through the pulsing air above Times Square, all the while with the shouts of pedestrians ringing in her ears.

ALICE: Whee! Ha ha! Is it a bird? A plane? No, it's Mimsy Loyne's literary secretary. Whoo hoo!

BUDDY [narrating]: And all I could think about was the way Alice used to gently scoff at me for my own collection of comic books. She knew I read them every moment I could, as I stood at my pretzel store. She knew of my deepest desire of all, of one day having a story of my very own accepted by the Incredible Comics Company. Sometimes she would read over the scrappy little stories I would write, turning her expert eye on them. I knew they weren't any good really, but she liked to encourage me.

ALICE: Oh, Buddy, if you could see me now.
(Whoosh!)

BUDDY [narrating]: But I could, although she was just a dark speck on the horizon, zooming all over the place. Somehow, I could imagine her, and hear her rush of ecstatic thoughts on her maiden flight above New York City. In a way, I was her very own narrator.

ALICE: Whoo! Ha, ha. You can write my story, Buddy. I'm your very own superheroine, and you could write my very own comic book. Whoo!

BUDDY [narrating]: And if I'd known she could hear me with those superpowered ears, I'd have shouted back, I'll do it, Alice! I'll write it for you! The Incredible Comics Company will have to listen to me then. It was then that I looked again at the torn comic book cover Mrs Wibbsey had had in her possession. I peered closer at the credits at the bottom. Art by Hal Moushima, words by Hudson. That's me, Buddy Hudson.

BUDDY: That's *me*, Mrs Wibbsey.
WIBBSEY: Is it indeed. I should have known. This is one of our anomalous artefacts.
BUDDY: Your what?
WIBBSEY: The reason we're here in the past.
MIMSY: All right, I've had enough of this. Get out of my apartment! Bring back my secretary!
BUDDY: Yeah, Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, Alice. We've got to get after Alice. She's never flown before.
MIMSY: Well, when she comes back down to Earth, tell her from me she's fired. Oh, I can't stand people who draw attention to themselves.

BUDDY [narrating]: Just about that moment, Alice was acquitting herself pretty well. She was a natural at flying about the place. I needn't have worried. Already she had saved a toddler from falling out of an apartment window. She'd prevented a robbery on 81st and 8th, and she'd put out a fire in a bakery with a freezing blast of super-breath. She was amazing! This was all second nature to her. Right then it was the Doctor we should have been more worried about. Still afflicted by this mysterious weakness, he wasn't in a good way. And added to that, he and Mike Yates were stuck in the back of a patrol car, wedged in Seventh Avenue traffic just below Times Square.

MIKE: I have to say, Doctor, I'm not sure I do love New York after all. I certainly won't if we end up in a police cell.
DOCTOR: It doesn't look very promising, does it. You know, Mike, on every stage of this chase through Time, there has been a spate of unexplained murders. Very nasty.
MIKE: Think it's all linked, do you? The Park, Frau Herz's hotel, Paris.
DOCTOR: A pattern is forming. A mosaic, if you like, laid down by a single entity, drawing us further into its game.
MIKE: It's hardly a game when so much death is involved.
DOCTOR: This creature has no respect for human life. What are a few bystanders to it? Nothing. Nothing, apart from oh, sustenance, perhaps. Lifeforce.
MIKE: What are you getting at?
DOCTOR: I think our demon, whatever it is, needs to feed off living energy in order to keep doing what it is doing, moving about in Time, using that primitive dematerialisation chamber, and altering its appearance to suit each new environment.
MIKE: Like a chameleon.
DOCTOR: Or a chimera, Mike. A deadly potpourri of physiognomies and DNA. It could be anyone.
MIKE: I think you should rest, Doctor. You're looking exhausted.
DOCTOR: This isn't at all like me. I never tire in this way. Some external force is affecting me. It keeps coming and going, like oh, thunder.

BUDDY [narrating]: It sure was sweltering and sticky in the patrol car, and because of the snarl-up in the traffic, they weren't moving anywhere. One of the cops up front rolled down his window, and that was when they started hearing all the cries and shouts on the streets. Something about a flying dame. A girl was swooping about in the skies above the Seventh Avenue theatres and delis. Now everyone was looking up and yelling about it.

(Whooshes and applause.)
MIKE: Oh, my goodness, look! It's that girl.
DOCTOR: She seems to have recovered remarkably well.
MIKE: Looks as if you were right, Doctor, about that comic book and her destiny.

BUDDY [narrating]: The cops in front were startled to see that Miss Starfall had come right down to Earth, to land gracefully right in front of their stationary patrol car. They dashed out to confront this amazing looking woman in her silver cape and boots, her winged helmet and her gleaming golden bustier. My girl Alice looked great. Arms folded across her chest, she very calmly demanded that the cops release her friends out of their custody.

DOCTOR: That's very kind of you, but really, I have everything under control. Miss Starfall, isn't it?
ALICE: So it says on that weird comic book of yours.

BUDDY [narrating]: Of course, the cops didn't take kindly to this cocktail chatter. They refused to release anyone, and looked set to arrest Miss Starfall too, for causing ructions in a busy street. That was when lasers shot out of Alice's eyes and melted their handguns.

ALICE: Ooo, that's pretty good.

BUDDY [narrating]: While the cops dealt with their shock, my brave girl wasted no time in grabbing hold of both the Doctor and Mike's hands.

MIKE: Oh, no. You're not taking me anywhere. I'm not flying, especially in handcuffs.
DOCTOR: Oh, come on, Mike. You'll love it. Ready when you are, Miss Starfall.
MIKE: Are you sure you're well enough for this, Doctor?
ALICE: Oh, hold on tight, gentlemen.
(Whoosh!)

BUDDY [narrating]: Somehow she just knew she'd be able to take the weight of the two guys. Right then, my girl seemed pretty sure she was capable of anything. Across town, at that very moment, her erstwhile employer, Mimsy Loyne, was convulsed on her chaise longue, and not through fulminating about the loss of a decent secretary. The strange old harpy was convulsed with laughter. But how come?

MIMSY: (laughing) Don't you see, Buddy? Don't you see that everything is going precisely to plan?
BUDDY: Whose plan would that be exactly, Miss Loyne?
MIMSY: Oh, this is all quite, quite delicious.
WIBBSEY: Wait a minute. Look.
(Footsteps on the staircase.)
WIBBSEY: Oh, he's gone.
BUDDY: Who'd you see?
WIBBSEY: It was the Doctor, coming up the stairs.
BUDDY: Are you sure?
WIBBSEY: Who else wears a scarf like that?

BUDDY [narrating]: We ran down to the next level, just in time to see the elevator doors closing. Mrs Wibbsey looked back towards the stairs and then gave a loud cry.

WIBBSEY: Doctor! There he is again.

BUDDY [narrating]: This time we both saw a flash of scarf above our heads.

WIBBSEY: He must be going up to Mimsy's apartment. Come on. Doctor!

BUDDY [narrating]: Weird thing was, when we got back to Mimsy's floor, all we saw was a glimpse of a coat and scarf scuttling away around the corner.

WIBBSEY: What's he playing at, the ridiculous man. Why would he run away from me?

BUDDY [narrating]: I happened at that moment to peer over the bannister and saw, yeah, you guessed it, another hat and scarf coming up this way, and then another, and another.

BUDDY: Er, Mrs Wibbsey? There seems to be more than one Doctor. Suddenly it's like a medical conference in here.

WIBBSEY: I see what you mean. He's not going to be very pleased about this. Someone's been running up copies of this clothes.

BUDDY [narrating]: We drew back into the unlit shadows of the landing, and watched these figures climb the stairs and brush past us, their scarves dragging along the carpet after them. We couldn't see their faces, those wide-brimmed hats were pulled down so low, but it was obvious by now that none of them was the Doctor.

WIBBSEY: Come on, let's follow them.

BUDDY [narrating]: Now, I told you I was a writer, yeah? Well, I got a good instinct for a story, and to me this seemed like a safe bet.

WIBBSEY: But why dress up like the Doctor? What does it mean?

BUDDY [narrating]: Without being seen, we followed the eerie, silent, ascending figures to a doorway on the top landing. We watched them open the door onto darkness, and file inside.

WIBBSEY: (sniffing) Can you smell that?
BUDDY: Yeah. What is that? Something strange, coming out of that room.
WIBBSEY: Jelly babies.

BUDDY [narrating]: Meanwhile, true believers, Mimsy Loyne was still staring out of a window at Central Park, and let me tell you, she was feeling pretty pleased with how things were working out better than she could ever have planned. If you or I could have been there and seen her raddled face twisted with triumph, we'd have been in no doubt that she was the genius in command of the day's bizarre events. And how pleased she looked now, as the figure of Miss Starfall came swimming through the hot July skies towards the Dakota Building, carrying with her the Doctor and Mike Yates, secured only by means of the Doctor's enormous scarf. This was, of course, the *real*Doctor. The definite article. He sure was enjoying himself as he flew over the Park with his coat flying out behind him like a cape, even despite the weakness that sapped his very soul and the headache that was raging inside his skull. Incredibly, he was enjoying this crazy flight over the city.

(Whoosh!)
DOCTOR: What do you think, Mike?
MIKE: I, I haven't opened my eyes yet.
DOCTOR: (laughs) If we fell now, we'd be dashed to bits. Is that a skating rink down there?
MIKE: Don't!
DOCTOR: She's very good, isn't she, considering she's just gained her powers. I say you're very good at this.
ALICE: Thank you.
DOCTOR: Marvellous.
MIKE: Has the fresh air revived you, Doctor?
DOCTOR: A little. But on the whole I do still feel rather odd.

MIMSY: Fool. But I think at last we may have him in our grasp.

BUDDY [narrating]: As you know, I wasn't there, but Alice told me later on this was pretty much how things panned out. Miss Starfall brought the Doctor and Mike to Mimsy's tall window on the sixth floor (breaking glass) and with one delicate superpowered flick, she kicked the glass in.

MIMSY: What in Heaven's name are you doing, girl? Haven't you caused enough disturbance here today? I dismiss you from my employ. Leave me at once.
ALICE: Only too glad, Mimsy, but not before I introduce you to some guests who are very keen to see you.
MIKE: (groaning) Let me sit down. The room's still swaying.

DOCTOR: So here we are, in the boudoir of Mimsy Loyne, the not so silent film star. Hello there, dearie. How are you?
MIMSY: How dare you come crashing in here?
DOCTOR: Oh, dearie, should we have sent our card up first? Would you mind if I sat down as well? I'm feeling a bit off-colour today.
MIKE: Doctor.
DOCTOR: (sotto) Oh, suddenly it's much worse, Mike. I feel drained of all energy. This must be near the epicentre.
MIMSY: What are you whispering about, huh? Don't make yourselves too comfortable. You know, you really shouldn't have come here at all.
DOCTOR: Quite right. The police, who are currently under the misapprehension that Mike and I are murderers capable of reducing a man's body to a husk, will track us back here before long. We must hurry about our business.
ALICE: And what exactly is your business, Doctor?
DOCTOR: Something very murky, to do with demons, Alice. Dead bodies, curious objects, and awful, awful demons. And I wouldn't mind betting this strange ailment of mine is mixed up in it all as well, eh, Mimsy Loyne?

BUDDY [narrating]: Let's leave that on a close-up of the Doctor's intently staring eyes, and cut straight to Mrs Wibbsey and me, still outside that room on the highest floor of the Dakota. The attic space, in fact. We're listening at the door, and we can hear chanting from inside.

(Whispering)
WIBBSEY: Sounds to me like black magic. Some kind of cult.
BUDDY: With everyone dressed up as the Doctor? We gotta get in there and have a look.
WIBBSEY: I think you're enjoying this.
BUDDY: Do you know how boring it is selling pretzels? And anyway, my girlfriend's got superpowers. How much danger can I get into?
(Door creaks open.)
BUDDY: Right, we're in. Shh. They're too absorbed in their rituals to notice us. thank goodness.
WIBBSEY: I can hardly take it in. It's a room full of Doctors.

BUDDY [narrating]: It sure was. Or wannabes, at least, swirling round in a circle like they were at some kind of Satanic barn dance. Solemn faces and shadows flickering in the candlelight, There were hats and scarves everywhere, as the members of the cult moved round in procession.

WIBBSEY: What's that thing in the middle of the room, on that sort of altar?
BUDDY: I dunno. We'll have to get closer.
WIBBSEY: It's glowing. Look, it's some kind of electronic device. They're worshipping it.
BUDDY: Hey, a gizmo.
WIBBSEY: (loud) It's the last bit of the Doctor's spatial geometer from the Tardis!
BUDDY: I think we've been spotted.
CULTIST: Keep the chant going. Do not let the sacred words fade. Cos hoc tear pen, Cos har rite pen. Now amana missis quo. Quo mars hanna aram. Betor bainga. Betor betingo. Yet factor hit. Fat deity ho. Fat deity ho.

BUDDY [narrating]: And without breaking another line in their weird litany, they all just started advancing on us. Meanwhile, several storeys below, the real Doctor was facing up to his own problems.

DOCTOR: Mimsy Loyne. Ah, Mimsy, Mimsy, don't you remember me?
MIKE: You know this woman, Doctor?
DOCTOR: Oh yes, of course. Did I never tell you?
ALICE: Miss Loyne, where's Buddy? I left him here with you.
MIMSY: I wonder that you dare to show your face in here after showing me up, flying all around the place, smashing my windows on your way back in. You're already all over the TV news.

ALICE: I am?
MIMSY: Oh, you surely don't imagine that after this you can remain in my employ?
DOCTOR: Possibly you'll have to renegotiate terms, but I imagine her shorthand is second to none and oh, her typing speed will be marvellous.
MIMSY: You keep out of this.
DOCTOR: Oh, charming. You weren't like that back in 1922.
MIMSY: Oh, I didn't know you in 1922.
DOCTOR: Perhaps I looked a little different then, you certainly did, but it was still me, Mimsy. We shared something very special on Sunset Boulevard.
MIKE: Really, Doctor?
ALICE: Where is Buddy, Miss Loyne? If you tell me, I promise I will never darken your door, or, or kick in your windows ever again.
MIMSY: He left a little while ago with that old English fruitcake.
DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey has gone?
MIMSY: Mmm, they left together.
ALICE: I'm going to look for Buddy.
MIMSY: What are you gonna do, stand in the Park and holler?
ALICE: Oh, you forget, Miss Loyne. I have got superpowers now. X-ray vision, superhearing. I know the sound of Buddy's heart, his every breath. I will find him!
DOCTOR: Good for you! And when you do, and if Mrs Wibbsey is with him, would you let her know we've escaped the police, and that we're here having nice cup of tea with my old, very old flame, Mimsy Loyne.

BUDDY [narrating]: Alice was filled with new purpose. She strode out of that luxurious apartment as if she never intended on going back. Her whole hideous life of enslavement to that mean-minded superstar was over at last.

MIKE: (sotto) Doctor, you said when we were in that police car that you thought there was an entity at work here. The same one you faced in Paris and in the Alps. The same thing was responsible for the murder in Central Park.
DOCTOR: (sotto) Yes, Mike, I do detect the hand of an unknown being at work. Something that can disguise itself. As I said, a chimera.
MIMSY: I couldn't help overhearing. I'm so relieved to hear that you know about it too. Now that Alice is gone, I can talk freely. You don't know what it's been like in recent months. I've been a prisoner here. Not her, me. That girl, she's a monster, even before that weird accident.
MIKE: You mean Alice is?
MIMSY: Yes, Alice, my literary secretary. That's why she suddenly had superpowers. She's made herself insanely powerful. She wants to take over the world.
MIKE: Calm down, Miss Loyne.
MIMSY: You don't know what it's been like.
MIKE: Try us. Tell us.
DOCTOR: (sotto) Shh. You're too trusting, Mike. This woman could wind you round her withered little thumb. Can't you see? She's manipulating us, or trying to.
MIKE: I think she's genuinely upset.
MIMSY: Of course I am. I'm just a poor, defenceless old woman. That girl's kept me here a prisoner.
DOCTOR: Oh, Mimsy, really, you were always a terrible liar, as I remember all too well to my own cost. Why, back in 1922
MIMSY: Need you go raking up the past, Doctor? I was a young girl then. Perhaps I hurt you, but I didn't mean to.
DOCTOR: So you do remember?
MIMSY: And I apologise from the bottom of my heart.
DOCTOR: Oh, how very interesting.
MIKE: See, Doctor? I think she's genuine. Please, tell us about Alice. You say that there's more to her, even before her miraculous transformation?
MIMSY: That's what I'm trying to say, young man.
MIKE: Ooo, it's been a while since I was called that.
MIMSY: You're remarkably well-preserved, Mister Yates, wasn't it?
DOCTOR: She's a flatterer. Don't listen, Mike.
MIMSY: Oh, that girl, she isn't even human. I have an inkling that, oh, it sounds ridiculous, I

feel that she is in reality some kind of alien intelligence.
DOCTOR: In disguise?
MIMSY: Yes, of course in disguise.
DOCTOR: Now whatever could make you say that?
MIMSY: Sometimes the mask slips.
DOCTOR: Yes, they tend to do that, don't they?
MIMSY: Some nights, in the dark and the quiet of my apartment, I can hear her, and she's talking to someone. Not someone human, and she isn't on the phone. I can hear voices talking back. Strange hissing voices. She is consorting with devils. Or demons.
MIKE: What do you think, Doctor?
DOCTOR: I think she's a good actress. But you always were, weren't you, Mimsy Loyne? You were the original Femme Fatale. You could make us believe anything.
MIMSY: I'm not lying. My secretary is in league with some kind of terrible power, something not of this Earth.
MIKE: Having seen what I've seen today, that makes sense to me.
DOCTOR: It makes a kind of sense, but I don't think our murderous demon intends to take over *this* world. I don't believe it has any such lofty ambition.
MIKE: Then what? What does it want?
DOCTOR: I thought at first it was simply revelling in the chaos it could cause. It has some time travel capability. I thought it was simply enjoying itself, spinning through Time and causing these anomalies, murdering and destroying and stealing life energy from its victims, and then changing history, dropping clues.
MIMSY: Oh, this is beyond me. Alice has been travelling in Time?
DOCTOR: Our demon has been zig-zagging through history and, if it doesn't sound too egotistical, I think it's all to do with me.
MIKE: You mean it's been tracking you down?
DOCTOR: Almost precisely the opposite, Mike. It's been luring me, drawing me on, making me think that *I* am tracking *it*.
MIKE: I see.
DOCTOR: Yeah.
MIKE: What about this life energy that you said that it needs. You don't suppose the demon's found some way to drain it from you?
DOCTOR: It's a possibility. I'll tell you what, though. Tea is a marvellous refreshment, isn't it? Didn't you promise us some tea, Mimsy?
MIMSY: I'm afraid I am without staff today.
DOCTOR: Oh, that's all right. Put the kettle on, Mike.

BUDDY [narrating]: So who was the wiliest of these two clever old souls? Mimsy Loyne was perched like a dreadful raven on her chaise longue, eyeing the Doctor suspiciously. Meanwhile, his eyes were wandering around the walls, peering intently at her movie posters and memorabilia.

DOCTOR: Do you really remember our little dalliance back in the 1920s, my dear?
MIMSY: Oh, Doctor. How could you even ask? Who could ever forget about you?
DOCTOR: Darling Mimsy.
MIKE [OC]: Where do you keep the tea things?
MIMSY: I've no idea, young man. You were very special to me, Doctor, then and now.
DOCTOR: Was I? Am I?
MIMSY: You know it's true.
DOCTOR: Then it's my great pleasure to tell you that actually, Mimsy, there was no primrose path dalliance. I wasn't there in your past. I was lying.
MIMSY: What!
DOCTOR: And so, you are lying, Mimsy, except you're not really Mimsy at all, are you. Not in the slightest bit.

BUDDY [narrating]: Close-up on Mimsy's shocked expression. The Doctor had tricked her. There was fury in her eyes, blazing red, demonic red. Slowly, she stood and raised herself to her full height. Mike Yates wasn't there to witness this, but I can see it all in my mind's eye. The

Doctor gives a great gasp of pain. He cries out as he slips to his knees, and the film star laughs out loud at his predicament, a shrieking, wicked laugh.

MIMSY: (laughing) You may think you've uncovered the truth, Doctor. It doesn't matter. You're at my mercy. You're helpless as a kitten before me, aren't you.
DOCTOR: Never. I'll resist you with every jot of my remaining life force.
MIMSY: Huh. I could snuff you out like a candle, but of course I wouldn't dream of it. Not when I need you so badly.
DOCTOR: You do? What for?
MIMSY: You're in great demand, Doctor. Now shush. Just lie there, my dear Doctor, while I go and make last minute preparations. By the time I get back, you'll be as good as knocked out, and not even your Captain's tea will revive you. Bwahahahahahaha!

BUDDY [narrating]: Cut to full page spread of the crazy dressed up cultists in the dusty attic. Mrs Wibbsey and I had been effortlessly overpowered and tied up with, what else, incredibly long, multi-coloured scarves. I tried to put my dukes up and fight 'em off, of course, and Mrs Wibbsey kicked a few shins, but we were overpowered by sheer force of numbers.

(Chanting continues.)
WIBBSEY: What are you lot playing at? You must know the Doctor and what he's like. You know he'll come after and rescue us.
BUDDY: It's no use trying to reason with them, Mrs Wibbsey. These guys are all brainwashed. They look like a bunch of hoodlums and punks off of the street. But who's paid them to get up in this crazy way?
CULTIST: Enough of the lip, skinny-dip. Just button it and keep still.
WIBBSEY: You can't keep us prisoner up here. We haven't done anything.
CULTIST: Shaddap, lady. You've defiled our sacred space. Ain't it enough?
WIBBSEY: But why are you all dressed up as the Doctor? Are you out of your minds?
CULTIST: We got our instructions. We're doing important work here.
WIBBSEY: Oh yes? Worshipping a mechanical implement and spouting gibberish?
CULTIST: It may look like that to you, but there's a little more to it than that.
BUDDY: Geez, Mrs Wibbsey, this really is one of them crazy cults. They probably all think they're going to the stars. These kind of nuts don't think twice about taking human life.
CULTIST: You said it, son. Sacrifice, murder, it's all the same to me, so long as you're out of our way.
WIBBSEY: You can't! Just because we interrupted your ghastly ceremony?
BUDDY: Hey, fella? For what it's worth, you've scared us enough. Just let us go, okay? We won't tell anyone what you guys are up to. We won't even tell the Doctor.
WIBBSEY: There they go again. Why are you worshipping the Doctor? He isn't a god. He'd hate all of this, though the silly fool'd be flattered as well.
CULTIST: The Doctor's important, right? You know that, we know that. Our boss knows that.
WIBBSEY: Your boss?
CULTIST: You don't think we're doing this for the kicks, do ya? But the boss has to feed.
BUDDY: You've lost me. I don't understand. Are you not, are you not human or something?
CULTIST: We're human, all right, but the boss? That's a different matter.

BUDDY [narrating]: Meanwhile, many storeys below in the Dakota Building, Mike Yates had at last emerged from Mimsy's kitchen with a tea tray, only to find the Doctor looking like death warmed up on her Persian rug.

(Crash of tea things!)
MIKE: Doctor!
DOCTOR: It's worse, Mike, whatever it is that's debilitating me.
MIKE: Where's Mimsy gone?
DOCTOR: She stormed out. She's not the Mimsy the world knows, you know. Quick, help me up.
MIKE: You're in no fit state.
DOCTOR: We have to go after her. After them all.
MIKE: But where?

DOCTOR: To the source. To the source. To the epicentre. To the thing that's draining my life force away.
MIKE: Are you sure you can make it, Doctor?
DOCTOR: I have to, Mike. If I don't, we're all doomed.

WIBBSEY: You must stop this. Give the Doctor back that piece of the spatial geometer. Put an end to the killings, and all this bizarre business. Please.
CULTIST: No can do, lady. The boss says we gotta keep up with the killing and with the chanting. We got work to do.
WIBBSEY: You foolish man, the Doctor will stop you.
CULTIST: He's already lost.
WIBBSEY: How's he lost? What do you mean?
CULTIST: Lady, we haven't been dancing around this trinket cos it's pretty. We've been doing it cos the boss says we have to. I dunno how it works exactly, but the upshot is that as long as we all focus our minds on him, and divert our mental energies into the box of tricks, we neatly leech the old boy's life force. So long as we're in business up here, he's helpless. We got the Doctor at our mercy.
BUDDY: So that's what it was with the headaches and the nausea.
WIBBSEY: Oh, my giddy aunt. I knew there was something amiss. He's usually fit as a tick. And he's usually here by now. This terrible lot have been doing voodoo on the poor man.
CULTIST: Voodoo shmoodoo. The boss says it's science. So long as the Doctor can't fight back, we're all happy. And he can't. He's finished, Mrs Wibbsey.

BUDDY [narrating]: Before the cultist guy could gloat some more, the cavalry arrived. Or rather, one lone soldier in the form of my brilliant, super-enhanced girlfriend. She had tracked me down via my own skittering heartbeat. Imagine that. What it would be to have hearing that powerful. So there she was, up in the attic and kicking down the door.

(Crash!)
CULTIST: What the? Who are you?
ALICE: The guy at the pretzel stall calls me Miss Starfall. And you are?
WIBBSEY: They're a dreadful bunch of ne'erdowells.
BUDDY: And they all need their butts kicked in a big bad way.
ALICE: Oh ho, I'm only too happy to oblige.

BUDDY [narrating]: And that's precisely what she did. Miss Starfall swung into action and became a blur of high-kicking pins and karate-chopping arms. Oh, Alice! In that moment, I knew she would be my muse and my heroine forever. The noise of this fracas carried out onto the landings of the building below. Even on the staircase, where just then Mike was helping the Doctor, half-carrying him up the steps, they could hear the noise of the battle overhead.

MIKE: It's coming from the top of the building.
DOCTOR: That fits. The higher we go, the weaker I feel. We've got to get up there, Mike.
MIKE: Better not risk the lift if someone really is out to get us. I'll have to carry you.
DOCTOR: Just let me lean on you.
MIKE: Doctor, you're not gonna make it.
DOCTOR: I must. Whatever is doing this to me, I have to face it. I have to face it. (faintly) I have to face it.

BUDDY [narrating]: Up in the attic chamber, bodies were falling by the wayside. Unconscious, you understand, not dead. Those guys didn't have an ounce of muscle between them. They were just hypnotised lackeys and street bums dragged in and dressed up by the head of the cult. None of them stood any kind of chance against the lithe and powerful Miss Starfall. With a surprising determination, Mrs Wibbsey elbowed her own way into the battleground and over to the make-shift altar. Next thing I knew, she was within a hair's breadth of their holy of holies.

WIBBSEY: Oh ho, ho, Doctor, you're going to be so pleased.

BUDDY [narrating]: The leader of the cult was beside himself with panic and fear. He wedged his bulk in between the spatial geometer and the determined housekeeper, and stared in dismay at his fallen men.

WIBBSEY: Let me pass, man. Hand that component over to me.
CULTIST: Lady, I don't wanna hurt ya, but we gotta do what the boss tells us.
WIBBSEY: You're really scared of this boss chap, aren't you.
MIMSY: And so he should be, Mrs Wibbsey. So he should be.
WIBBSEY: Mimsy? What are you doing up here?

BUDDY [narrating]: Star of stage and screen, Miss Loyne had made her entrance into the attic compartment. She slunk into that room like she was walking onto the set of some old movie.

MIMSY: Who has attacked my poor, precious boys?
WIBBSEY: Did you know these men were cavorting like this at the top of your building?
MIMSY: Know it? They're on my payroll, honey.
ALICE: She's mixed up in this, Mrs Wibbsey. Look at her. They were working for her.
BUDDY: She's the boss, the one he was so scared of.
CULTIST: Forgive us, Mimsy.
WIBBSEY: Hang on a minute. Mimsy Loyne the film star in charge of a space age cult? You sure about that?
MIMSY: You'd be surprised, Mrs Wibbsey, to learn of some of the things I've been in my long history.
WIBBSEY: What does that mean?
(Door opens.)
DOCTOR: It means that we've met her before, Mrs Wibbsey.
WIBBSEY: Oh, Doctor!
DOCTOR: We've met this ghastly person again and again throughout Time. No Mimsy she, I'm afraid. Has somebody stopped singing?

BUDDY [narrating]: Suddenly, the Doctor was like a changed man, bright eyed and bushy tailed, no longer afflicted with the mysterious weakness.

WIBBSEY: Oh, Doctor, you're better.
DOCTOR: Much. The energy force sapping my strength suddenly disappeared half way up the stairs. Something to do with these fellows on the floor, was it?
WIBBSEY: Yes, they'd rigged themselves up to the spatial geometer.
MIKE: What?
WIBBSEY: That's what this one said. They were doing some kind of weird ju-ju magic with it, and draining the life out of the Doctor.
DOCTOR: I imagine Mimsy here has used dimensional geometrics to rig up a primitive telepath debilitator, am I right or am I right?
MIMSY: Ah, I bet you were top of the class back in kindergarten, weren't you, Doctor. Well, have a gold star, sugar.
DOCTOR: Don't sugar me, honey. I didn't do too badly, as it happened. And I haven't done too badly today, either. Even if I was put out of action for a little while, I had my friends to rally round.
BUDDY: And now we're all here together, like a super team!
MIMSY: You all make me sick. But no matter. I've got everything I need. The telepath debilitator served its purpose.
DOCTOR: Which was?
MIMSY: Why, to incapacitate you until preparation here could be completed, which they now are, so I can dispense with this ridiculous disguise.
DOCTOR: Quite right. Feel free to slip into something a little more comfortable. What about your horns and wings and cloven hoofs, eh, sugar?

BUDDY [narrating]: Suddenly, Mimsy was ripping out of her silk dressing gown and a pair of great jagged purple wings were sprouting out of her back! Believe me, there were horns curling

round out of her skull, and a forked tongue flickered out of her mouth. And the worst thing of all? She was laughing. Laughing at us all.

DOCTOR: Very fetching, my dear.
MIKE: So it really is the same entity.
DOCTOR: Oh yes, she's been all of them, haven't you, demon?
MIMSY: Emperor Claudius, the widowed concierge, the Ice Queen.
ALICE: You haven't won, whoever you are, whatever you say you are. I'm here to stop you.
MIMSY: (laughs) Stupid girl. You're part of it too. My plan, my wonderful plan. That meteor was no accident, nor was your finding it. You became Miss Starfall simply to play a role in this drama which I devised, the final element of which was a comic book cover with today's date on it. An irresistible puzzle that the time travellers came back to investigate.
ALICE: So you're a comic book artist as well as a monster?
DOCTOR: She's a shape-changing demon, and she's worn umpteen faces in recent times, each one of them for the same purpose. To kidnap me.
ALICE: She said I was part of the plan. What plan? What does she want?
MIMSY: Only the Doctor. The rest of you are irrelevant.
DOCTOR: Ah, you see, that's where the likes of you always make a mistake. You fixate on the object of your desire, and while he's helpless and weak and under your thumb, you're so busy gloating that you take your eye off the other people. People like Mike Yates over there, for instance, having just overpowered your chief lackey there and tied him up with his own scarf while we've been talking. Mike is just about, if I'm not mistaken, to reclaim the crucial element of my spatial geometer for me. Well done, Mike.
MIKE: Got it! It's a pleasure, Doctor.
MIMSY: You know, Doctor, you might be right. That's an interesting idea. Perhaps your pitiable friends do have more value than we realised. (laughs)
ALICE: Watch out, she's up to something. Look!

BUDDY [narrating]: Suddenly, Mimsy grabbed Mrs Wibbsey by her upper arms and started dragging her away towards a small door in the far corner of the room. The Doctor's housekeeper struggled ferociously, but by now some of the cultists had started to come round, and they got up to help Mimsy hold her. I was yelling out no, leave her alone, she's just a feeble old woman. Mrs Wibbsey didn't look very pleased at that either.

DOCTOR: Demon, don't you dare hurt my Wibbsey.
MIMSY: I think we can up the stakes in this little game of ours, Doctor, and take it all to the next level. Congratulations on recovering all the elements of your Tardis's spatial geometer. You're going to need them. You see, Mrs Wibbsey and I are going on a journey now.
MIKE: Let her go, you animal!
WIBBSEY: Help me, Doctor. Don't let her take me.
DOCTOR: It's all right, Wibbs, the demon won't harm you. It can't. It needs me on side.
MIMSY: Are you sure, Doctor? Would you be so reckless with your housekeeper's life? What does she matter to you anyway?
WIBBSEY: Doctor, please. Oh!
DOCTOR: Grit your teeth, Wibbs.
MIKE: Doctor, where's the creature taking her?
(Demon Mimsy's laughter fades away.)

BUDDY [narrating]: That question was soon answered. The Doctor seemed to be weighing up possibilities, unsure of the best course of action. As the rest of us hovered and dithered, looking for a way in to help her, Mrs Wibbsey was bundled away. The small door at the end of the room sprang open at Mimsy's touch. A weird green glow came emanating from within.

WIBBSEY: No! Oh, no!
BUDDY: Doctor, what is it?
DOCTOR: It's a dematerialisation chamber. Think of it as the demon's yellow cab.
MIKE: We've got to stop them, Doctor.
MIMSY: Come any closer, and I'll kill her.
DOCTOR: And if we let you get away?

MIMSY: You'll see, Doctor. You'll see. My chickens will come home to roost.
DOCTOR: Balderdash!
MIMSY: Remember, Doctor, the Sepulchre is prepared for you! Bwahahahahaha!

BUDDY [narrating]: Alice, sorry, Miss Starfall, wasn't taking any of that nonsense. She surged forward and knocked out the last standing cultist with a killer blow. But even she was too late. Just at that moment, Mimsy and Mrs Wibbsey vanished behind the heavy door.

ALICE: I can't budge it, Buddy. It's stuck.
BUDDY: Wait, it's glowing. Something's happening!
DOCTOR: Get back from there. Don't touch that door! There's nothing we can do now.
MIKE: Oh, no.
BUDDY: What's it doing to her in there?
ALICE: It's going to blow up.
(Wibbly dematerialisation sound.)
ALICE: (gasps) Oh, it's gone! There's nothing there but a wall.

BUDDY [narrating]: She was right. Alice, the Doctor, Mike and I were left standing in a room full of unconscious cultists, and no one else at all.

MIKE: Mrs Wibbsey, she's gone.
DOCTOR: We'll find her, Mike.
MIKE: How?
DOCTOR: It's what the demon wants. There has to be a clue. There just has to be another clue. What did the demon say just then?
MIKE: The Sepulchre is prepared.
DOCTOR: Ah. Remember the inscription on the half of the heart, Mike?

BUDDY [narrating]: The Doctor looked grimly determined as he led the way downstairs and out of the Dakota Building, back to Central Park and that strange blue craft of his.

DOCTOR: Time for us to return to Nest Cottage, Mike, to retrench and draw up plans.
BUDDY: Hey, Doctor, you taking us with you?
DOCTOR: You and Alice must stay in New York, Buddy.
ALICE: Of course. I've got a job to do here.
BUDDY: She's right. You're right, Alice, honey. This city needs a heroine like you.
DOCTOR: Ah yes, well, you see, there might be a problem with that.
ALICE: Problem?
BUDDY: She won't be harmed, will she? I mean, that meteorite won't
DOCTOR: I'm afraid that Alice's powers will fade, slowly but inevitably.
ALICE: Oh. Oh no.
DOCTOR: They were bestowed on you only temporarily, my dear. That meteorite was planted in your path by the demon. Your powers were just another part of its games. My guess is that the meteor came from its unearthly abode, flung down to Earth for you to find. It was a distraction, nothing more. The effects will soon wear off.
MIKE: Are you sure, Doctor? I mean, you don't want to be leaving this girl running around with superpowers.
ALICE: I'm kinda disappointed to hear all that, Doctor. How long before they fade? How long before I go back to being just normal again?
BUDDY: Alice, you'll never be normal to me.
ALICE: Oh, gee, thanks.
BUDDY: No, what I mean is, I'll love you whether you can shoot laser bolts or not.
DOCTOR: It will be a matter of hours, I think. I've observed this creature's powers at work. The demon's energy fades away when its attention moves on, and it'll be elsewhere.
ALICE: Then I guess we'd better fly, Buddy.
BUDDY: Huh?
ALICE: Before my gift fades away. If you want me to fly you over the city?
BUDDY: Sure. One last trip round the island.
MIKE: Oh, do be careful, both of you.

BUDDY: Hey, it's research for the comic book. Alice may lose her true powers, but in the stories I'll write about her, she'll be fabulous forever!
ALICE: Hold on tight, buddy. Bye, Doctor. Bye, Mike.
BUDDY: See you in the funny pages, guys.
(Whoosh!)
MIKE: So, what now, Doctor? Where do we even start looking for poor Mrs Wibbsey?
DOCTOR: We've got a lot of work to do, but we'll find her, you can be sure of that. The hunt is on, Mike, and the game's afoot.
(The Tardis dematerialises.)

BUDDY [narrating]: So, true believers, that was the end of our run-in with the mysterious Doctor, back then in the summertime of 1976. He was off in the blink of an eye. off into who knows what kind of adventures, as he went in pursuit of poor, lost Mrs Wibbsey. So remember, be sure to buy Incredible Comics for more amazing adventures with the astounding Miss Starfall.

ALICE: Come on, Buddy. Let's get some pizza.